

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

 Saturday, January 8. 1709.

I Am willing to let the *Rebearsal* run his full Length, in his mighty Argument, of Baptism being a Regenerating Ordinance, before I begin again with that Head; I pretend not to abundance of Skill in Polemicks, nor shall I enter into that Province as a *Divine*; but since 'tis every Private Christians Duty, to be able to defend the Doctrines they profess, at least so to defend them, as to confirm their own Belief of them; so I may, I hope, without Invading the sacred Office of the Ministers, speak to a Point so plain, and which every Christian understands, (*viz.*) The Meaning, Efficacy, and Extent of the Ordinance of Baptism.

In the *Review*, N^o 116. I gave you the Words of the XXVII Article of the Church

of England, *Viz.* That it is a Sign of Regeneration;

Baptism is a Sign of Regeneration or New-Birth, whereby as by an Instrument they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the Promises of the Forgiveness of Sin, and of our Adaption to be the Sons of GOD by the Holy Ghost are visibly sign'd and seal'd.

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Mr. *Rebearsal*, to come off of this, says, N^o. 23. 'Tis the *Sign* and the *Thing* signified too, and brings a Learned Simily to prove it, viz. That of *Writing* to convey an *Estate*—— Not thinking, I suppose, or not remembring, that 'tis the Gift, not the Instrument of the Gift; the Purchase-Money paid, not the Deeds, that are the Substance of the Title to an Estate—— And if these are firm, tho' there were never any Deed of Gift, or Deed of Purchase Executed, yet THE RIGHT to the Estate remains Good, and the *Person* shall possess it; —— And let him go on with his Parallel, as far as he can; I say, that by his own Parallel, I will undertake to prove, That *Baptism*, as the Seal or Sign of Regeneration, cannot it self give Regeneration; and if it cannot Regenerate, then the Person may be Regenerate without it; and if Regenerate WITHOUT BAPTISM, may be saved WITHOUT BAPTISM; for *Regeneration and Salvation are Inseparables*. Rom. 8.

At the same time, I am far from lessening the Value every Christian has, and ought to have, for this most Valuable Institution; and must say, That when the *Rebearsal* scurrilously and slanderously tells the World, That the Church of *Scotland* lessens and undervalues this Ordinance, and will not Baptize an Infant, tho' in extremity, but at such and such a time, viz. after the Sermon; he grossly abuses the *World*, and more that *Church*; for I can give him sufficient Testimony, that the Church of *Scotland* puts all the due Value on that Ordinance, which the other Protestant Churches in the World do, and that the Scripture or the Nature of the Thing demands; and at the same time that he tells us of a Child that expl'd before the Sermon was ended, and was not baptised; I can testify, and bring him living Witnesses to prove it, That the Ministers in *Scotland*, have frequently in such Cases, broke off in the middle of the Sermon at the Request of the Parent, and on a Visible Extremity to Baptize an Infant, and then proceeded on with the Sermon again; and I have seen a Minister in *Scotland* shorten and manifestly break off his Sermon, and shorten the usual Exhortation

in the Office of Baptism, in Case of the Extremity of the Child.

This is noted only to clear up the general Mist of Prejudice, this *unfair Adversary* would cast before the Eyes of the World against the Church of *Scotland*, as if they rejected Baptism as unnecessary, than which nothing can be more false or absurd, tho' at the same time they cannot set up Baptism in the Room of the Spirit, which is the Author and Efficient in the Regeneration of a Believer; but I shall refer this Affair, till I see, whether he will offer any thing more material, than yet he has done to prove, that the Soul of the Infant is lost without Baptism; which, I believe, will puzzle all his Sophistry.

Also I desire, he will tell me, whether Circumcision, which was the Fore-running Seal of GOD's Covenant before our Lord's coming, was so absolutely necessary, that if an Infant had dy'd without it, that Infant had been out of the Church of GOD, then confin'd to the Children of the Circumcision; for no doubt some Children dy'd before they were eight Days old then, as well as now, and we read of none circumcis'd before the eighth Day.

It is true, the Church of *Scotland* have made Orders against private Baptisms, tho' not so strict as this Author pretends; for I could name him several private Baptisms that I have seen in *Scotland*, but they do not approve them, neither does he, so much as publick; and the Difference lies only here, that he pretends Baptism absolutely necessary to the Salvation of the Soul of the Child, which we challenge him to prove.

Again, in the Type of Baptism, Circumcision, it was very rarely, if ever practis'd among the *Jews*, that they circumcis'd any Person, *Infant* or *Adult*, but in the Temple or Synagogues, i. e. in the publick Assemblies, that is to say, after they had a Temple; what they did in their Bondage or Wilderness-State is not to the Purpose.

But we are now come from his calm Arguing, a Thing he once promis'd, but could not keep his Word, to his old Way of Railing; and if Baptism be as necessary, as he says it is, he lays down the most horrid, hel-

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liff and abhor'd Position, that ever could come out of the Mouth of one that calls himself a Christian; see the Title of his Paper, N^o 24.

N^o 7. Better die without Baptism, *that is according to the Rehearsal*, N^o 23. without Regeneration, than have it from the *Erasian Kirk*, that is the *Presbyterian Kirk*, for so he is pleas'd to term them, tho' they are farther from Erastianism than the Prelajsts of Scotland by far.

So that in short, Damnation with him is better than Regeneration, if it must come by the Hand of a *Presbyterian Minister*.

To this he adds his own Authority, and in his *Bilinsgate* Stile.

N^o 6. Baptism by a Porter, better than by the Moderator of the general Assembly.

To which I must reply to him in the Gross, for it is paying him in his own Coin; Baptism by a *Presbyterian Minister* is as Authentick, as Baptism by the Archbishop of Canterbury, *no Reflection upon his Grace*, and I prove it from the Practice of the Church of England, who, as much as they object against Presbyterian Ordination, and Presbyterian Re-ordination, yet never came up to his Length to re-baptize any that came over to them, who had been baptiz'd by Dissenting Ministers; tho' had they been baptiz'd by a Porter, it had been no Baptism, and they ought to re-baptize.

Again, what shall we say to, or do with a Man that will Lye? The Truth is, the best way is to let him Lye, for Lying will certainly expose the Cause he defends.

Now in the same Paper, he says, the *Presbyterians deny, that Private Baptism is better than none*, and say, that *none is better*, Rehearsal, N^o. 21.

This is a downright Forgery, and a Man that will do this, ought to be talk'd with by a Whipping Post, not a Pen and Ink—— The *Presbyterians* have appointed the Time of Baptism *after Sermon*, the

Place of Baptism *in the Assembly*; but that there are no Private Baptisms in Scotland, that the Ministers cannot Baptize before Sermon in the Assembly, or in Private out of the Assembly; and to affirm that they do not, is a notorious Falstiy, contriv'd in his own Brain, and Vomited out with the overflowing of his Gall against the Church of Scotland.

And now I cannot but humbly apply my self, *even to the Church of ENGLAND*, from whom this Author and his Party for their Pernicious Principles are cast out, as they deserve—— And with the lowest Submission, propose a few Queries.

1. Whether it be Consonant to the Acts of Securities of both Churches Establish'd by and Incorporated into the General Treaty of UNION, by which the *Presbyterian Church* is acknowledg'd to be A TRUE CHURCH, and is settled and legally for ever Establish'd, under the Title of *The True Protestant Religion*, to suffer a Virulent Incendiary to Publish in Print, and Insult the said True Protestant Church with it; that they have no Gospel-Ministry, nor Right Administration of Ordinances, which is a direct Negative to the said Act of Parliament, and not being such, a Divider of the Nation TO JUSTICE?
2. Whether it is agreeable to the Nature and Design of the Union, which was to Unite the Hearts of all Her Majesty's Subjects of whatsoever differing Opinions, to suffer such Publick Insults of the North British Nation, and their Establish'd National Church, its Judicatories and Government, without due Punishment?
3. Whether this Treatment is the Way to reconcile the Scots to the Union, or to the English Nation, and whether it is likely to contribute to the future peaceable Deportment of the Nations towards one another, in order to preserve and render effectual, lasting and useful the Union it self, as all good Men desire?

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4. Whether there is not some Justice due to the *Scots* upon this Account, and whether such Justice was not publicly promis'd them at the Time, when the Treaty was in Transaction?

And if the Representatives of *Scotland* would permit an humble Well-wisher to *Britain's* Peace to address to them, it should be, That they would claim in Parliament as the undoubted Right of the Church of *Scotland*, now one of the Establish'd Churches of *Britain*, and equally establish'd with the Church of *England* by the Union, that her Judicatories be defended, her Privileges supported, and her Settlement acknowledg'd by all the People of her Bounds, as the Judicatories, Privilege and Settlement of the Church of *England* are defended, supported and acknowledg'd in her Bounds; and above all, that all Invektives, Insults and Reproaches be mutually laid down, caused to cease, and the Promoters of them discourag'd and brought to Justice on both sides.

This is but a just Claim; for there can be no Peace between the Nations, while either Party are thus treated. Let Arguments on either side be brought as often and as warm as they will, safe Disputing will hurt neither, but railing Accusations were always the Work of *Sathan*, and are brought by none but his emissaries. To argue against the Church of *Scotland* or *England* may always be lawful; but to rail at, abuse, insult and reproach either Church, especially with Forgeries and Falacies, ought not to be suffer'd on either side; It agrees neither with Justice, with Policy, nor with the great Design of the Union.

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